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| **SECTION: Identifying the Appropriate Target Group** | |  |  |
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| **2. Identify Target Group** | |  |  |
|  | 1. **Please summarize your Target Group by statutory area, school, grade level, and sub-groups.** (Maximum 3000 Characters)   The Midd-West School District [MWSD] Keystones to Opportunity [KtO] committee began this project with a vision for district-wide literacy improvement. Our team firmly believes in continuing in this direction for the full grant application submission. We realize this move is aggressive and very challenging, but the need for systemic reform across our district is imperative. In District Leadership That Works, Marzano calls for “tight coupling” regarding student achievement. Marzano concludes that support for tightly coupled districts is found in the research regarding high-reliability organizations, as well as the “highest-performing school systems in the world” (2009). Our committee agrees that tight coupling within the MWSD is one core ingredient for a district-level, birth through grade twelve effect on student achievement, and we believe the KtO funds will enable us to build upon and strengthen the structure to support this need.  Through this structure we will focus on general and specific needs in all five statutory areas. We have major needs in the areas of birth to preschool and high school. Addressing major needs at both ends of a child’s growth spectrum without focusing on needs in between is one more reason we believe a district-wide support structure is necessary.  We plan to initiate programs to support our birth through preschool aged children and their families. Our analysis of the economic, family, and education risk factor data provides alarming statics. Currently, 30.6% of children in Snyder County are born to mothers who received no prenatal care, 30.2% are born to mothers with less than a high school diploma, and the percentage of children under five living in economically at-risk families is 72.6%. Current Risk and Reach data puts our county in the moderate to high risk range; however, assistance for early childhood services at 20.5% falls significantly below the state average of 35.8%.  Within the MWSD our target group includes all K-12 students across three elementary buildings, two middle schools and one high school. We will address the needs of each and every student across a K-12 perspective with a Response to Intervention [RtI] structure embedded within our comprehensive literacy plan that supports learning across multiple tiers by focusing on high-quality instruction for all students and targeted supports for students in need, which are currently our economically disadvantaged and special education sub groups. According to Bernhardt and Hebert, “If you do RtI right, you will be engaged in a continuous school improvement process” (2011). We plan to develop an RtI structure that relies on multiple data sources that are gathered, analyzed and distributed as part of our comprehensive literacy planning process.  (2779 characters) |  |  |
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|  | **b. How many students and teachers are you targeting in each of the following statutory areas? For the purposes of this application, we are defining Middle School as grades 6 through 8, and High School as grades 9 through 12.**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | **# of Students** | **# of Teachers** | |  |  |  | | **Birth to age 3** |  |  | | **Preschool** |  |  | | **K-Grade 5** |  |  | | **Middle School** |  |  | | **High School** |  |  | |  |  |
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| **3. Describe how intensive work with this Target Group will positively impact one or more of the following: a) The oral language skills of children entering Kindergarten b) PSSA Reading scores (in all grades collected) c) DIBELS Next scores (K to grade 3) d) GRADE Reading scores (Pre-K through grade 12)** (Maximum 3000 Characters) | |  |  |

Our committee affirms that systemic literacy reform, as written through our district-wide comprehensive literacy plan, will positively impact ALL of the above scores.

Currently, little data is available through our early education programs, since only 20.5% of our children take advantage of early childhood services. The Snyder, Union, Mifflin Child Development (SUMCD) is the only provider of Head Start services in the county. Increasing the birth to age three services expands literacy opportunities to children currently receiving no services. We plan to integrate the evidence-based Parents as Teachers curriculum, a program designed to support parents and their children develop literacy skills before starting kindergarten. We expect to see significant gains in literacy as identified through the pre-K through grade 12 GRADE assessment, the K-3 grade level DIBELS Next assessment, and PSSA Reading scores across all tested grade levels.

Our grades 3-5 PSSA reading scores have shown little growth over the last five years. We plan to capitalize on the success we have seen with writer’s workshop by implementing workshop model teaching into the reading curriculum. Our writing scores increased from 42.3% to 77.2% just over the past two years through a strong commitment to professional learning that enables teachers to confidently address the individual learning needs of each student. Through this commitment we expect to see increases in our DIBELS Next scores, our PSSA Reading scores, and the pre-K through grade 12 GRADE assessment.

Our middle level schools exceed the state average of 38.41% free and reduced lunch students with West Snyder showing 43.4% of the students economically disadvantaged and Middleburg Middle School showing 41.6% of students economically disadvantaged. Additionally, Middleburg Middle School’s population of special education students also exceeds the state average of 14.28% resulting in a 15.5% population of IEP students. The committee feels strongly that these specifics should be addressed around a framework of enhanced literacy instruction for all students. Through this structure we expect to see increases in PSSA reading scores and the GRADE assessment at all levels.

Our high school level reading scores have remained alarmingly low across the past five years hovering close to the 50% proficiency mark. Recently, we have invested significant dollars into literacy-specific initiatives to include Reading Apprenticeship, authentic writing integration, and exposure to the Common Core State Standards. We plan to continue this approach through our Comprehensive Literacy Plan [CLP] that addresses the needs of all 9-12 students. We expect to see gains in 11th grade PSSA reading scores and the GRADE assessment at all levels.

(2783 characters)

**SECTION: Developing Local Comprehensive Literacy Plan**

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| **6. Discuss the role your Early Childhood Education partner(s) played in completion of your Pre-application. Please note the name and agency of your birth to age 3 representative(s) as well as the name and agency of your pre-school representative(s). Were the representative(s) of your Early Childhood Education partner(s) physically present at your LEA Literacy Core Team meetings or did they provide input in another way? Please be specific.** (Maximum 3000 Characters  Jane Campbell is the Executive Director of Snyder, Union, Mifflin Child Development [SUMCD]. Ms. Campbell’s background includes more than 30 years experience as an administrator and direct service provider in early childhood education & services for children with disabilities birth though age 21. Ms. Campbell’s experience includes previous employment with the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit and as the Special Education Supervisor in the Midd-West School District.  Ms. Campbell was directly involved in the completion of our pre-application, as well as our full application. She is our birth to age three representative and our preschool representative. As Executive Director of the not-for-profit SUMCD agency, she is in charge of the only Early Head Start and Head Start centers in our area, she also directs the STAR 4 Susquehanna Children’s Center, which serves children from six weeks through school age, where Midd-West families have enrolled their children in child care services. Finally, she oversees a home visiting program in a neighboring county that utilizes the Parents as Teachers curriculum.  Ms. Campbell provided expertise by completing the initial pre-application needs assessment, by attending meetings with the core Midd-West KtO committee at the local intermediate unit, and by attending meetings within the MWSD. She spent one-on-one time with Ms. Daphne Snook, assistant superintendent, to develop the plan for the birth through preschool statutory area. Additional communications took place over the phone & through email exchanges.  Jane Campbell provides a unique perspective in that she previously worked in the MWSD as supervisor of special education. She remains connected to the early learning needs of our preschool children through her work with SUMCD, which provides her with a three-county perspective of programming.  Mary Mahoney-Ferster, coordinator of Early Care Education LEARN [Local Education & Resource Network] in Snyder & Union Counties, provides input regarding early learning needs within the MWSD area. Ms. Ferster coordinates transitions to school from early learning centers, parent-engagement activities, the local One Book program, committees through United Way, and state & local advocacy groups. Ms. Ferster brings to the group key data specific to preschool opportunities, childcare facilities, and community needs within the MWSD.  Finally, Ms. Snook is involved in a newly created West End Childcare Taskforce, which was formed to identify & support early childcare needs specific to the west end area of the MWSD. This area has been targeted due to the low income population, limited transportation availability, & no opportunities for high-quality early learning. The committee is currently actively involved in collecting data via a multi-county wide survey regarding childcare and/or preschool needs. This data will directly benefit the work of the core KtO committee regarding early learning needs.  (2976 characters) |  |
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| **7. If you receive Keystones to Opportunity funding, how will you ensure that representatives from all 4 statutory areas will be fully involved in the development of your Local Comprehensive Literacy Plan? For example, if a member of the Team who solely represents a statutory area, how will you go about replacing that individual?** (Maximum 3000 Characters) |  |  |
| Key to the long-term success of our program is the ability to sustain efforts across years of changing budgets and changing staff. Change is to be expected, but it can sometimes derail the best efforts for district-wide improvement. Through our comprehensive planning process and the systems and structures we put in place through this planning process, we expect to point the district towards a vision for district-wide literacy improvement and sustainability that will extend beyond the changing environment to solidify the vision.  In Leadership and Sustainability, Fullan writes that, “Deep district reform requires leaders at or near the top who understand the direction in which the district needs to go and are sophisticated about how to get there.” (2005). The MWSD KtO committee plans to build a core leadership structure that focuses the direction, ensures sustainability, and communicates, communicates, communicates the plan to teachers, students, parents, and community members. We anticipate this structure of leaders to be fingers that outreach to support each of our five (we count birth to preschool as two) statutory areas while at the same time wrapping around and supporting the main district-wide literacy focus. Leaders will be carefully chosen as those who are relational, visionary, collaborative, and reflective (Reeves, 2006).  Additionally, our plan is to incorporate multiple layers of support within this core literacy leadership structure. This tiered structure includes district-wide leadership, building-level leadership, and a core literacy leadership team. Unique to our structure is the overlap we plan to build into each literacy leader’s responsibilities. This overlap creates structural support at key transitional points in a child’s life and school career to include: a High School Literacy Leader who focuses on grades 9-12; a Middle School Literacy Leader who focuses on grades 6-9; an Intermediate Level Elementary Literacy Leader who focuses on grades 3-6; a Primary Level Elementary Literacy Leader who focuses on PreK-3, and a Birth through PreK Literacy Leader as provided through the Parents as Teachers program.  Through this structure we do not see a sole person responsible for one statutory area. We see a multi-leveled approach with multiple people teaming up to represent each statutory area enabling the district to continuing focusing and moving forward despite changing staff members and/or changing budget environments. If and when team members change our work will continue until the appropriate replacement is secured.  (2529 characters) | | |
| **8. Describe the process your team will use to develop its Local Comprehensive Literacy Plan and how the plan will be used within the LEA to guide literacy activities.** (Maximum 3000 Characters) |  |  |
| Midd-West Literacy Planning Team members involved in the development of the Midd-West Comprehensive Literacy Plan [MWCLP] will consist of district leaders, building leaders, and core literacy leaders. This team includes representatives from the initial KtO grant writing planning team, plus the additional literacy leader positions as identified in question number seven above who represent each of the statutory funding areas identified in our district-wide plan. The planning team will also consider soliciting input from additional teacher representatives from various content areas over multiple grade levels throughout the district in order to begin communicating the work of the literacy planning team to all stakeholders. Additional input will also provide the committee with content-area experts who can further elaborate on instructional strategies that have been successful literacy integration techniques in their classrooms already.  Our team will begin working on the MWCLP within two weeks following the new grantee orientation conference in May, 2012. Initial work with the core committee will include a thorough review of the PA Comprehensive Literacy Plan [PACLP], outlining tasks for all committee members, developing a timeline to keep planning efforts on task and moving forward, and gathering baseline data for submission to the U.S. Department of Education by the June 1, 2012 deadline. Planning will continue throughout the summer with September 1, 2012 goal for completion. This planning procedure will develop a comprehensive plan for improving literacy in the key areas as identified in our needs assessment in order to target and improve our literacy environment.  Once completed and board approved, the plan will be used primarily to communicate and teach our district-wide vision for literacy instruction. This plan will be a necessary communication and learning tool for teachers, students, parents, and community members. The plan will outline the five guiding principles as identified in the PACLP to ensure that all members of the district community are aware that literacy is the “critical foundation” for learning among all our birth through grade 12 students.  We will use the MWCLP to guide our work and our decision making. The MWCLP will focus our efforts in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development around the common thread of continuous school improvement.    (2420 characters)  **SECTION: Acquiring Baseline Knowledge and Skills** | | |
| **9. Describe the manner in which your teachers will acquire the baseline knowledge and skills covered in the 9 literacy content areas during Year 1. Specifically: a) How many teachers do you plan to send to each content training; b) Discuss whether LEA training will be provided by intermediate units or other vendors; c) If a vendor other than an intermediate unit is planned, explain how the applicant will provide concrete evidence that participants have acquired the knowledge and skills specified for the content area (Appendix B); and d) Describe how the teachers in the Target Group and others who do not attend a specific professional development session will acquire the baseline knowledge and skills in that area.** (Maximum 5000 Characters)  The KtO planning team feels strongly about building a structure of professional development that provides opportunities for literacy leaders to build relationships with and among all teachers in a supportive, collaborative environment. It is through this model that we will elaborate on our plans for delivering professional development topics to all staff members over the up-and-coming year. We realize that the model of train-the-trainer delivery in its truest form is not the perfect model for professional development. Reeves makes clear this distinction in Transforming Professional Development into Student Results (2010). Specifically, he says that sustainable influence requires the development of individual and social abilities through deliberate practice and feedback. Our team believes this influence can grow through a professional development support structure that exists primarily within our district providing opportunities to deliver core instruction, and then supporting that core instruction through modeling, coaching and additional support if/when necessary.  Initially, we plan to send four KtO administrators [our KtO Core Administrative Team] to the New Grantee Orientation session in May. This group includes Daphne Snook, assistant superintendent, Cynthia Hutchinson, high school principal, David Harrison, K-8 principal, and Jane Campbell, birth to age five representative. All above individuals have been involved with the KtO grant since the pre-application process, and each individual represents one statutory funding area, which completes our district-wide, birth through grade 12 focus.  Next, we plan to send our KtO leadership team to all nine content sessions throughout the year, as well as the necessary training for the DIBELS Next, GRADE, and HEAT assessment instruments. Our KtO leadership team includes our core administrative team, plus Donna Samuelson, Middleburg Middle School principal, Gregg Wetzel, Middleburg Elementary School principal, David Fassett, supervisor of special education, and four Literacy Leaders that are new positions that will be filled shortly after we learn of our award status. Trainings will occur at the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit [CSIU].  We anticipate the leadership team will return to the district and provide all remaining staff members with content from a total of four or five of the nine content sessions. These sessions will be delivered throughout the school year. We expect our leadership team to attend a specific topic and return to plan for the delivery of this content to their statutory area.  Our draft schedule includes:  Summer 2013 - Leadership Team attends DIBELS Next, GRADE and HEAT professional development  July, 2013 - Leadership Team attends Using Data for Literacy Decision Making @ CSIU  August 21, 2013 – All 185 staff members receive Using Data for Literacy Decision Making PD @ MWSD  September, 2012 - Leadership Team attends Universal Design for Learning & Digital Technology @ CSIU  October 8, 2012 - All 185 teachers receive Universal Design for Learning & Digital Technology PD @ MWSD  Late October, 2012 - Leadership Team attends Reading Apprenticeship @ CSIU  November 11, 2012 – 65 secondary teachers currently not trained in Reading Apprenticeship will attend the Reading Apprenticeship PD session @ MWSD  December, 2012 - Leadership Team attends Successful Transitions Along the Literacy Continuum @ CSIU  January 21, 2013-All 185 teachers receive Successful Transitions Along the Literacy Continuum @ MWSD  Late January, 2013 - Leadership Team attends Supporting Learners with Special Needs @ CSIU  February 15, 2013 - All 185 teachers receive Supporting Learners with Special Needs @ MWSD  In addition to the CSIU content training sessions, our elementary and middle school teachers will receive training from Columbia University Teachers College staff developers who will be scheduled to come to our district a total of 10 days throughout the school year. This job embedded model of professional development and coaching has proven very successful throughout this year as we have continued our implementation of writer’s workshop throughout the elementary and grade six classrooms. We anticipate these sessions will exceed requirements for the Building Blocks for Literacy training, but further review of the course syllabus is required. One thing we know for certain is that over the course of the past two years our writing scores have increased from 42.3% to 77.2%. If this increase also happens with the integration of reading workshop, our goal of achieving 100% proficiency will be achieved in just two years.  (4627 characters) |  |
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| **10. Describe the quantity and quality of any additional Year 1 professional development your teachers or other staff members will participate in using Keystones to Opportunity grant dollars. Include your rationale for this professional development and the research base that leads you to believe this professional development will contribute to literacy improvement within the LEA.** (Maximum 3000 Characters |  |  |
| Level five professional learning as described by Bernhardt & Hebert (2011) should be “deep rather than broad, allowing teachers to plan their learning to increase student achievement.” For this reason, our team has chosen to focus on five of the nine content trainings in year 1 rather than attempting all nine in one year. We feel strongly that our literacy leaders gain the exposure to all nine in order to best support their teachers, but 54 hours of PD in one year for 185 teachers is excessive.  Our goal is for content to be learned, internalized & used in the classroom. We expect to work with our literacy leaders in order to have them deliver content, model strategies in the classroom pertaining to said content & then support those strategies as teachers try to integrate them in the classroom. We plan to select literacy leaders who will possess the qualities of high quality educators & coaches who are supportive & who will work well with teachers as they try new teaching.  Using KtO grant dollars we will fund five of the nine content trainings. We have prioritized sessions to best meets the needs of our staff as per the timeline indicated in question 9. During year 2 we will utilize KtO grant dollars to fund the remaining four topics of Family Engagement & Family Literacy, The Common Core & Literacy Design Collaborative & Navigating Content with ELL.  We anticipate the Building Blocks for Literacy session, which is geared to birth to grade 8 will be delivered through our Columbia University Teachers College [TC] staff developers. We have built a relationship with staff developers this year through our work with elementary writing workshop & we feel confident that a move into reading will be strongly supported by PDE. Our plan is to further expand these activities to include reading workshop professional development, which is delivered in the same job embedded, supportive coaching manner as writing workshop was this year. This training will occur during the regular school day with students in classroom lab sites where staff developers will model lessons & support teachers as they practice these new skills.  The reading & writing workshop model is supported by icons such as Marie Clay, Donald Graves, Lucy Calkins, Nancie Atwell, Richard Allington & Lev Vygotsky to name a few. John Hattie (2009) in his synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to student achievement provides compelling statistics about the power of feedback, student/teacher relationships & engagement all critical components of both reading and writing workshop teaching. Hattie (2012) makes clear the key role of learning leaders is to construct the learning. He says there are features of PD that we know have an impact on student achievement & such features include coaching over an extended time, use of data teams & teachers working collaboratively to plan lessons based on student evidence. All major components of the professional development provided by our TC staff developers.  (2999 characters) | | |
| **11. Describe how you will ensure that teachers implement the knowledge and skills acquired during Year 1 of the initiative with fidelity.** (Maximum 3000 Characters) |  |  |

Our administrative team does not feel strongly about administering top-down directives in order to get people to do the work that is required. We feel rather that knowledge and skills can be built and acquired through a supportive and safe environment, and we plan to manage implementation in that way.

With this thought in mind, it is the intention of our team to provide professional development and the coaching supports that accompany each of the nine topics. Coaching will not be voluntary, but rather an expectation and a practice for all teachers. Our MW literacy leaders will provide this support primarily, in addition to our Teachers College staff developers. Through this supportive coaching environment, teachers teaching will be visible, expectations for implementation of strategies will be communicated and lessons will be monitored.

We will monitor implementation through the assessment tools as provided, but also through regular visitations and non-evaluative walk-throughs of the teachers’ classrooms. Teachers will be expected to practice the instructional strategies they learn as well as the analytical, data decision making strategies that assist them in making instructional decisions that best meet the needs of all learners in the classroom.

Regular meetings to discuss newly learned practices will occur peer to peer and in small content-area groups. Instructional strategies and decision making will become part of the everyday practice.

(1471 characters)

**SECTION: Improving the Classroom Literacy Environment**

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| **12. Based on current research, describe an ideal literacy environment (group setting) for children birth through age 3. a) Which components of this environment do you and your literacy partners currently have in place? b) If birth through age 3 is part of your Target Group, describe the priority improvements you will make to the literacy environment for this age group during Year 1. c) If birth through age 3 is not part of your Target Group, describe how your district will pursue continuous improvement in this area without Keystones to Opportunity funding. (Maximum 3000 Characters)**  An environment that enhances emergent literacy gives children a sense of trust & assurance even as it excites their wonder & invites them to explore. (Bardige & Segal, 2005) Wherever it is located, an environment that supports emergent literacy is full of possibilities for imagining & pretend play. It provides children with a wealth of spoken & written words & opportunities to engage in reading, writing, singing, & storytelling.  These environments include: Creating a safe & comfortable setting that supports relationships & invites exploration, including spaces for quiet & active play, intimate gatherings, & large group activities; furnishing rooms with equipment, books, & materials that are developmentally appropriate; making the environment “print rich.” to show children & adults that the environment invites play & conversation.  A quality birth through age 3 program places strong emphasis on helping parents help their children develop literacy skills. Snyder Union Mifflin Child Development (SUMCD) has provided Early Head Start (EHS) in MW since 1962. EHS currently serves 30 infants & toddlers, utilizing the evidence-based EHS national model. EHS is a 12 month, primarily home-based program that promotes positive parent-child interactions, increases parent understanding of typical infant/toddler development, & helps support their child’s learning through play. In MW SUMCD has a Combination EHS Model that provides 8 two year-old children with both home-based & center-based components.  SUMCD’s Project PEEK (**P**arents **E**ncouraging & **E**nhancing **K**ids) provides Early Intervention Services under Part C of IDEA to 20 MW infants/toddlers with developmental disabilities. As a mandated program, PEEK provides home-based education & therapy services based upon an Individualized Family Service Plan.    ELECT Student Specialists served 72 MW pregnant & parenting teens in the past 5 years. Specialists are trained in the research-validated Parents as Teachers curriculum, a parenting, early literacy, & school readiness program.  All three partner programs utilize evidence-based curricula that support families as a child’s first & most important teacher. The programs work with each family to create a positive learning environment that engages their child in stimulating activities. Families learn to build on teachable moments in their daily routines & promote creative play, reading & singing.    Year 1 will focus on identifying high-risk families that do not meet the current programs’ eligibility criteria or that reside in currently unserved areas of MW. Year 1 priority improvements are: work with existing partners to establish identification & referral procedures that prevent duplication of services & ensure families receive appropriate services, recruit, hire, & train staff in the Parents as Teachers curriculum, conduct outreach to identify & enroll high-risk children in services, & develop a combination home-center based model to begin in Year 2 for 2 year olds. |  |
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| **13. Based on current research, describe an ideal literacy environment (group setting) for pre-school children. a) Which components of this environment do you and your literacy partners currently have in place? b) If preschool is part of your Target Group, describe the priority improvements you will make to the literacy environment for this age group during Year 1. c) If preschool is not part of your Target Group, describe how your district will pursue continuous improvement in this area without Keystones to Opportunity funding.** (Maximum 3000 Characters)  The ideal literacy environment for preschoolers is similar to those from birth to age 3, but some children from poverty backgrounds are behind what is typical for other children in their age group in vocabulary, math & literacy & self-regulation. For these children, programs need to provide more intensive learning opportunities—such as more small group activities & one-on-one interaction—to accelerate their learning & help them to catch up. (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009) An exciting learning environment for preschoolers should offer a variety of play & learning experiences. It should encourage creativity, support language & inspire pretend play. It should be flexible and take on different shapes & appearances as children’s interests evolve. A quality preschool program places a strong emphasis on helping parents help their children develop literacy skills.  SUMCD has provided Head Start [HS] services in MW since 1981, currently serving approximately 43 district children. SUMCD offers two program options: Two center-based part-day classes operate on a school-year calendar, & Full-year, full-day services offered at SUMCD’s STAR 3 and STAR 4 Children’s Centers are located in nearby, out-of-district communities. Both options provide HS’s complete range of services. SUMCD HS fully includes children with disabilities through funding & support from the local IU.  SUMCD HS programs provide intense instruction in all developmental areas utilizing the Creative Curriculum, coordinated with the PA Early Learning Standards. A rich language & literacy component exists in all instructional activities. The role of the family is supported through progress notes, parent conferences, home visits & parent-group meetings. Staff model positive instructional techniques & teach parents developmentally appropriate behaviors & skill acquisition. Reading & storytelling by parents is emphasized, with pre-school books regularly loaned to families.  Child Outcomes for the first half of the 11-12 School Year show literacy skills improving from 21% to 50%. The Winter assessment data demonstrates a level of proficiency that more than doubled, with 50% of the children entering kindergarten next year demonstrating proficiency in literacy skills. By the end of the school year, it is anticipated that greater than 85% of enrolled children will be ready to enter kindergarten.  Year 1 will focus on identifying & enrolling high-risk families that do not meet current program’s eligibility criteria or that reside in unserved areas of MW. Year 1 priority improvements are: work with existing literacy partners to establish identification & referral procedures that prevent duplication of services & ensure families receive appropriate services, establish PreK classrooms & Parents as Teachers program, conduct outreach to identify & enroll high-risk children in services, develop a combination home-center based model to begin in Year 2 for children who do not enroll in HS or PreK classrooms. |  |  |
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| **14. Based on current research, describe an ideal literacy environment for children in Kindergarten through grade 5. a) Which components of this environment do you currently have in place? b) If elementary schools are part of your Target Group, describe the priority improvements you will make to the literacy environment for this age group during Year 1. c) If elementary schools are not part of your Target Group, describe how your district will pursue continuous improvement in this area without Keystones to Opportunity funding.** (Maximum 3000 Characters) |  |  |
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| A literacy-rich environment from K-5 is the key to students’ lifelong success. The Common Core ELA Standards increase the rigor at all grade levels and place significant emphasis on the development of early literacy skills. In an ideal literacy environment, students are engaged in reading, writing and speaking every day in a variety of ways. Through modeling, teachers show students that they value reading and possess a passion for making connections and thinking critically about what they read. Teachers support students of all abilities through mini-lessons, small group instruction, independent reading, shared reading and individual feedback that occurs during one to one conferences between teacher and student. Children have access to a wide choice of reading materials based on their individual interests and abilities, and are encouraged to bring out their natural motivation to read voluntarily and often. In an ideal environment, learning to read is fun. All children feel comfortable and relaxed when they are learning to read and any sense of anxiety or failure is avoided. The classroom space is organized to encourage movement and interaction; desks are arranged in clusters, tables are used for small group instruction, reading areas are cozy and include classroom libraries with many high-interest books, soft furniture, carpets and pillows. Student work, word walls, and student/teacher created charts are displayed. Finally, the ideal environment includes on-going and job-embedded professional development for the school staff.  At the K-5 level, we currently have these components in place. Using the workshop model, students have demonstrated remarkable improvements in their writing. For example, the number of proficient 5th grade students has increased from 42.3% in 2010 to 77.2% in 2011. Students write every day for at least 45 minutes, and teachers model strategies by engaging in their own purposeful writing. Every Writing Workshop lesson begins with a mini-lesson and unfolds into small group instruction and/or individual feedback through conferencing. Students choose writing topics that are interesting and relevant to them and continually improve their writing through the revision process. To keep the environment comfortable, students share their work with one another and celebrate at least once per unit. The classroom spaces are organized to encourage communication and collaboration and student work and charts are displayed throughout the classrooms. Our schools have been engaged in on-going professional development through a partnership with Teachers’ College of Columbia University.  During Year 1 of KTO, we plan to make priority improvements to the literacy environment by incorporating the fundamentals of the workshop model into our reading instruction. By utilizing the workshop model to enhance our reading instruction, we feel that our students can experience the same level of success they are currently experiencing in writing.   (2988 characters)  **15. Based on current research, describe an ideal literacy environment (group setting) for students in grades 6 through 8. a) Which components of this environment do you currently have in place? b) If middle school is part of your Target Group, describe the priority improvements you will make to the literacy environment for this age group during Year 1. c) If middle school is not part of your Target Group, describe how your district will pursue continuous improvement in this area without Keystones to Opportunity funding.** (Maximum 3000 Characters) |  |  |
| A literacy-rich environment from grades 6-8 provides the next crucial building blocks for students’ lifelong success. In an ideal middle school literacy environment, students are engaged in reading, writing and speaking every day, and make authentic connections between their literary experiences and their own worlds. According to Alan Purves (Atwell, 1998), “At the center of the curriculum are not the works of literature…but rather the mind as it meets the book, the response.” The emphasis is on cultivating a reading environment where students set independent reading goals and strive to meet them. Students are given multiple opportunities to think critically about works of literature and discuss those thoughts with adults and peers. Emphasis is placed on individual responsibility and self-initiation on the part of students and research-based instructional strategies and a passion for reading on the part of the teacher.  In an ideal middle school environment, teachers model effective reading comprehension strategies. Students have access to a wide variety of reading materials based on individual interests, abilities, and genre. All children feel comfortable and relaxed as they respond to literature and any sense of anxiety or failure is avoided. The classroom space is organized to encourage movement, interaction and collaboration; desks are arranged in clusters, tables are used for small group instruction, and an interactive reading area is established. Student work is displayed in the classroom and in the hallways. The ideal environment includes functional data teams and on-going and job-embedded professional development for the school staff. Partnerships with families and other stakeholders are nurtured.  We currently have these components in place in parts of the district. Using the workshop model in 6th grade, students have demonstrated remarkable improvements in their writing. Teachers have noted that students are writing more than ever and can effectively demonstrate comprehension through their writing. In 7th and 8th grades, we have been working to develop a workshop environment in our language arts classes. Our PSSA reading scores in 8th grade are indicative of the success our students have experienced as a result of this environment. In 2011, 89% of the 8th grade students scored proficient or advanced, exceeding the state average by 8%. 58% of the 8th grade students with IEP’s scored proficient or advanced, exceeding the state average by 13%.  During Year 1 of KTO, we plan to make priority improvements to the literacy environment by incorporating the fundamentals of the workshop model into our reading instruction. By utilizing the workshop model to enhance our reading instruction, we feel that our students can experience the same level of success they are currently experiencing in writing. | | |
| **16. Based on current research, describe an ideal literacy environment for students in grades 9 through 12. a) Which components of this environment do you currently have in place? b) If high school is part of your Target Group, describe the priority improvements you will make to the literacy environment for this age group during Year 1. c) If high school is not part of your Target Group, describe how your district will pursue continuous improvement in this area without Keystones to Opportunity funding.** (Maximum 3000 Characters) |  |  |

An ideal literacy environment in secondary schools is one in which students are exposed to and immersed in literacy resources and cognitive tasks that push their skill levels beyond their current level of performance; that actively engage them through collaborative, authentic, and relevant learning experiences; and prepare them for a multi-faceted and varied post-high school experience. Researchers are beginning to address the need for students to develop digital reading skills as students increasingly move from paper text to online resources and digital text. This ideal literacy environment also provides effective instruction and interventions by secondary teachers who consistently use data to inform instructional decisions and assessment choices that provide needed information to both teachers and students. Lee & Spratley (2010) address the need for secondary teachers to explicitly teach students how to read increasingly difficult text as relevant to their content areas. Also critical is having a structure in place to ensure human resources and time to meet the needs of students who do not meet literacy proficiency standards. Physical structures in place in a secondary school should be multiple, welcoming and positive, with a wide array of texts from which to choose and staffed by personnel who model and expect exemplary literacy skills and offer students choice. Guthrie & Humenick (2004) cite student access to many books and personal choice as the two most powerful factors for improving motivation and comprehension. The ultimate goal of an ideal literacy environment is to foster the students’ desire to be effective communicators through reading, writing, speaking and listening through the participatory involvement of all stakeholders.

Midd-West High School boasts a new beautiful library and a librarian who provides a welcoming disposition; she is widely known by students, staff, and parents as an excellent resource and support in all tasks. We also have several classroom libraries stocked in part by the teachers themselves; two of these rooms house the contemporary literature classes that we implemented as requirements for grades 9 and 10 over the past two years. The contemporary literature curriculum provides free choice of materials and instructional mini-lessons, both of which address relevancy, interest and targeted instruction as needed. To date, nearly one-half of the high school teaching staff have undergone Reading Apprenticeship training and have since been utilized in follow-up professional development activities with their colleagues.

Priority improvements include: consistent use of data to inform instructional and programmatic decision making, in-depth professional development to enable secondary teachers to effectively address literacy needs of students, the development of an RtII framework to ensure systematic interventions, and adherence to Common Core standards that raise the bar for literacy performance expectations.

(2991 characters)

**SECTION: Using Data for Instructional Decision-making**

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| **17. Describe your LEA plan for collecting the required assessment data within the specified timeframes. Please be specific and provide assurances that required data will be submitted accurately and on a timely basis.** (Maximum 3000 Characters) |  |
| Baseline data will be collected and submitted to U.S. Department of Education by June 1, 2012.  Our Birth to age three program utilizes the ITERS to gather data on the literacy environments of our earliest learners. Currently they administer a fall and winter collection, which provides them with the assessments that seamlessly coordinate with the requirements for KtO.  Our local preschool programs utilize the ITERS and the ECERS to gather data on literacy environments for our four and five year olds. Currently they administer a fall and winter collection, which provides them with the assessments that seamlessly coordinate with the requirements for KtO.  The district utilizes a district-wide assessment calendar to coordinate and organize all assessments throughout the year at each of the applicable grade levels.  At the elementary level we currently administer DIBELS three times per year in August, January, and May to kindergarten, first and second grade students using our reading specialists in a SWAT team approach. In order to collect the required data for KtO, we commit to transitioning to DIBELS Next for kindergarten, first, second and third grade students. We will also introduce the Group Reading and Diagnostic Evaluation [GRADE] assessment, as well as the Higher-Order Thinking, Engagement, Authenticity, and Technology [HEAT] observation tool. Both new assessments will be administered in coordination of DIBELS Next and occur three times per year in grades kindergarten, first, second, and third. Data will be gathered in the same format as we are accustomed to.  The district currently administers the 4Sight assessment for grades three through eight four times per year in August, October, January, and May. The 4Sight assessments are in addition to PSSA tests in grades three through eight. We have also begun to explore PDE’s Classroom Diagnostic Tool [CDT] as an alternative to the 4Sight assessment in grades six, seven and eight. In order to collect the required data for KtO, we commit to administering the GRADE and the HEAT assessments in grades three through eight to occur three times per year in August, January, and May.  At the high school level we currently administer the PSSA as required by PDE. We have begun exploring the CDT as a diagnostic tool for reading and mathematics. As required for KtO we commit to administering the GRADE and the HEAT assessments in grades nine through twelve to occur three times per year in August, January, and May.  (2448 characters) | | |
| **18. What is your LEA plan for analyzing and sharing aggregate literacy assessment results with all students, teachers, parents, and others in the school community?** (Maximum 3000 Characters) |  |  |
| Our district has been utilizing the data warehousing tool, Performance Pathways, for the past five years as an organization tool for analyzing all of our student data. Teachers annually set up their classes in order to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of their students throughout the year. Our teachers also utilize the Success for All Member Center to pull reports from the 4Sight assessments in preparation for data team meetings.  As a result of KtO and our hope of integrating Literacy Leaders into the leadership team, we will rely on these literacy leaders as key data people who will spend approximately 20% of their time analyzing data specific to their core statutory area, as well as looking at trends across multiple statutory areas. We are opting for this approach instead of one data management person because we believe each person can focus on his/her core statutory area, while also discussing trends through the collaboration of a team of other literacy leaders. This regular, dedicated and focused time will enable the literacy leaders to take on a more proactive approach through the structure of RtI we plan to put in place through our CLP. Our team will utilize current tools and new tools such as the University of Oregon’s online DIBELS data system in order to acquire a thorough and comprehensive picture of our district-wide strengths and weaknesses. The team will evaluate multiple measures to ensure a comprehensive and thorough view is established and decisions are made based on accurate information.  Currently, our PSSA data is the only data that is shared with students, teachers, parents and the school community through board presentations and the publishing of our annual data portfolio. Our planning team envisions a process of ongoing communication to include all data sources that paint a picture of literacy achievement across the birth through grade twelve spectrums. We plan to publish quarterly or trimester reports to parents, the school board, and the school community. We plan to integrate individual student data portfolios that can be shared with each student and his/her parents/guardians.  ( 2117 characters) | | |
| **19. How will your LEA and ECE program actively engage each of these stakeholder groups (i.e., students, teachers, parents and community member) in helping to improve literacy outcomes birth through grade 12? Please be as specific as possible.** (Maximum 3000 Characters) |  |  |
| Our team believes communication is a key ingredient to engaging stakeholders in the process of improving literacy. Through communication and invitation we believe our stakeholders will get onboard with the district’s vision and goals for high literacy achievement. We strive for students, teachers, parents, and community members to become actively involved in this process through birth to grade 12 parent literacy engagement activities, review of birth to grade 12 literacy-specific publications, and welcomed feedback through all means of communication.  As stated in question 18, our planning team envisions quarterly or trimester data reports that are created and distributed to parents, the school board, and the school community on our progress with our defined literacy goals. These documents should be published on our district’s website and shared with members of our school community. Currently, we publish an annual data portfolio that is posted online and distributed in hard copy to our school board and administrative team. This portfolio will be refined to highlight and emphasize our birth through grade 12 literacy goals. Reports will be shared at board meetings, shared with building-level PTOs during regular meetings, published in parent newsletters, published on our district’s website, and distributed to all staff members.  We plan to integrate an individual student data portfolio that begins early and follows the student through grade 12. Our goal is that students take ownership of this information so they are motivated to attain higher achievement in literacy through their own intrinsic motivation to perform at their best level. We think of this student portfolio as an Individual Literacy Plan that focuses on each student’s individual literacy needs providing all people associated with the student information about the student’s academic achievement and individual literacy goals. Regular progress meetings will occur with students and reports will be shared with parents/guardians.  The emphasis of our birth to age three groups will be on child engagement and parent involvement. Through our Parents as Teachers program we plan to emphasize and focus on parents as their child’s most important teacher. The primary goal being that “all children will learn, grow and develop to realize their full potential.” (Pfannenstiel & Zigler, 2007). This will occur through regular weekly and/or biweekly meetings that enable parent educators and teachers to work closely on the child’s literacy skills.  Our preschool program will also emphasize child engagement and parent involvement. Through our Midd-West preschool program we plan to target parent involvement by engaging parents in parent-child activities that demonstrate and promote literacy skills.  ( 2782 characters) | | |
| **20. At the end of Year 1, how will your LEA and ECE program know if targeted students are making adequate progress in improving literacy skills? Please define what “adequate progress” means for your LEA in Year 1 and the data you will use to determine whether your LEA and ECE program are on track.** (Maximum 3000 Characters) |  |  |

Evidence of progress will be attained from a variety of data sources to include ITERS & ECERS with the birth through age five group, DIBELS Next, GRADE, and HEAT with our kindergarten through grade three group, GRADE, PSSA, and HEAT with our grade three through eight group, GRADE and HEAT with our grade nine through twelve group and additional PSSA assessment data from our eleventh grade students. We will examine each DIBELS Next, GRADE, and PSSA data source for increases or decreases in scores with the expectation that all data will reveal an increase in literacy achievement levels. We will examine HEAT scores for evidence of student engagement, use of higher-order thinking strategies, learner-centered instruction, and research-best practices. The expectation is that data will reveal an increase of in the use of these strategies, as well as an increase in student engagement.

In year one, we will define progress through pre and post assessment results as defined above, but also through other measures that enable us to look at our district-wide program as a whole. Throughout the first year we will be implementing two brand new programs for our birth to age 5 children. One measure of progress will be to identify the number of families being served through these programs compared to the number of families previously receiving no services.

In our Parents as Teachers program, we will evaluate questions about program establishment, number of visitations, and pre and post parent survey results.

We will define adequate progress in grades K through 12 by examining the number of teachers who have received professional development from the nine selected professional courses being offered through KtO. Our team will also determine adequate progress through evidence that the~~se~~ strategies learned in the trainings are being incorporated into teacher lesson plans and consistently implemented into routine instructional practices, by use of a walk-through observation form that features targeted literacy strategies.

(2040 characters)

**SECTION: Implementing the Local Literacy Improvement Plan**

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| **21. What are the 5 priority areas for literacy improvement you identified in your Pre-application?**  *Add new data by entering the fields, then clicking the ADD button at the end of the row on the right.*   |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Priority #1** | **Priority #2** | **Priority #3** | **Priority #4** | **Priority #5** |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |   *(100 character limit)* |  |
| Priority #1  Launch a literacy leadership team to focus all district-wide literacy-specific improvements  Priority #2  Increase literacy achievement at the high school level in grades 9-12  Priority #3  Increase early childhood opportunities by starting new Parents as Teachers & PreK programs  Priority #4  Increase literacy achievement at the elementary school level in grades K-5  Priority #5  Increase literacy achievement at the middle school level in grades 6-8 | | |
| **22. Please identify some or all of the areas from your Pre-application priority list that have NOT been addressed under Professional Development, Classroom Environment, Using Data for Literacy Decision-Making, or Developing your Local Comprehensive Literacy Plan. Describe your team’s rationale for wanting to make improvements in these areas.** (Maximum 3000 Characters) |  |  |
| Our district-wide approach and goals target increased literacy achievement in all areas. We did not specifically reiterate our demographic, student learning, school process or locally relevant data from our needs assessment. The assumption made is that this information was used as criteria enabling us to submit a full application. Even though it has been mentioned before, it is important to reiterate that our needs assessment identified critical needs at both ends of the educational spectrum; high school & birth-age 3. Seventy-three percent of children under 5 live in economically at-risk families. This low SES contributes to limited access to early childhood care, which feeds into a culture of low achievement and places little value on the importance of a high-quality education. The cycle continues throughout the child’s elementary school experience often creating huge achievement gaps by the time the student reaches third grade. A consistent body of research (Shawitz et al., 1999 & Torgeson & Burgess, 1998) finds that few students who are poor readers at the end of 1st grade are able to catch up by the end of elementary school. We find that the parents’ belief about the low value of education filters through to our earliest learners and cycles continuously through to our high school students. These families typically stay in Snyder County and attribute to cycle of low expectations.  The team plans to level the playing field in the area of technology by purchasing iPads for all 9th grade students in order to provide them with 24/7 access to literacy-rich resources and activities. The high school currently has enough computers to roll-out the remainder to 10th-12th grade students in order to implement a 1-to-1 computing environment.  General, district-wide goals enable us to focus on all aspects of our district needs, which is the core rationale for moving forward with the district-wide approach. Woven into this general structure includes a specific focus on sub groups to include our special education and economically disadvantaged students, but this is not specifically highlighted because we are focusing on all students throughout our birth to grade 12 program. As we move forward with our RtI structure, we will cover the support structure for these sub groups as we are well aware of specific needs in these areas.  Specific to our leadership team, for ease of grant clarity we included individuals across each statutory area. Not specifically mentioned is that these individuals will overlap at key grade levels enabling us to focus on and monitor transitions. Transition was one area lacking support as evidenced through our needs assessment. The structure of our team will include literacy leaders across grades 9-12, 6-9, 3-6 and birth to grade 3.  We also did not mention work with partnerships although this is obvious primarily through our work with early education providers and our local intermediate unit.  (2956 characters) | | |
| **23. State each of the priority areas identified in question twenty-two as a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound) goal.**  *Add new data by entering the fields, then clicking the ADD button at the end of the row on the right.*   |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **SMART Goal #1** | **SMART Goal #2** | **SMART Goal #3** | **SMART Goal #4** | **SMART Goal #5** |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  |  |
| *(200 character limit)*  SMART Goal #1  Form a literacy leadership team that meets weekly & focuses on literacy-specific improvements as identified through multiple data sources. Overall district literacy scores will increase 10% by 2013.  SMART Goal #2  Increase literacy achievement at the high school for all 9-12 students as identified through multiple data sources. 11th grade students will meet or exceed 80% proficiency on the 2013 PSSA.  SMART Goal #3  Launch two early childhood programs for MW birth-age 5 children to increase literacy-learning opportunities for currently under served children to begin during the 2012-2013 school year.  SMART Goal #4  Increase literacy achievement at the elementary school for all K-5 students as identified through multiple data sources. grades 3-5 students will meet or exceed 91% proficiency on the 2013 PSSA.  SMART Goal #5  Increase literacy achievement at the middle school level for all 6-8 students as identified through multiple data sources. Grades 6-8 students will meet or exceed 91% proficiency on the 2013 PSSA. | | |
| **24. Please articulate the work breakdown structure for attaining each of these goals in Year 1 of the project. The action steps for each goal should be as specific as possible. The individual each action step is assigned to should be identified by name or role. The timeline should include specific dates rather than terms such as “ongoing” or “TBD.” These dates may need to be adjusted in the future, but since readers will be assessing the overall feasibility of the plan, including specific timelines will benefit the applicant.**  *Add new data by entering the fields, then clicking the ADD button at the end of the row on the right.*   |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Smart Goal** | **Action Step** | **Assigned to** | **Timeline** | **Evidence of Implementation** |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  |  |
| SMART Goal #1 | | |
| **25. How will your LEA evaluate the effectiveness of these local literacy improvement goals at the end of Year 1? Who will be involved in the evaluation? What evidence will you have that these improvements have led to improved literacy outcomes for students?** (Maximum 3000 Characters) |  |  |
| Literacy improvement goals will be evaluated at the end of year 1 by the KtO Literacy Leadership Team. Evidence will include a variety of data sources to include literacy leadership team meeting schedules and minutes, professional development offerings held in-district and out-of-district, evidence of literacy specific strategies written in lesson plans and/or consistently delivered to students.  The team will look at classroom instruction and student behaviors for evidence of engagement, higher level thinking activities, use of technology, authentic activities and assessments, learner-centered instruction and use of research best practices.  Literacy improvement goals will be evaluated through the use of various data tools as provided by KtO as evidenced through an analysis of end of year scores compared to baseline data gathered in June of 2012. We will also use PSSA scores as a measure of success for grades 3-8 and 11, and PVAAS data analysis will help us to determine areas that are showing low or high growth. We will look specifically at our economically disadvantage and special education subgroups for evidence of increased achievement.  Our ITERS and ECERS environmental assessments will help us determine growth with our birth through age 5 groups. We will also look at county wide Reach and Risk data for evidence that we have been able to serve more students throughout our county who prior to our new programming received no services.  Finally, we will revisit our needs assessment from our very first visit to re-evaluate all seven components and statutory areas in order to celebrate areas where increased services are noticed and refocus and target areas that are not showing improvements.  (1716 characters) | | |
| **26. How will these local literacy improvements be sustained when KtO dollars are no longer available?** (Maximum 3000 Characters) |  |  |

Literacy improvements will be sustained mostly through a gradual shift from KtO funding to the MW budget. This work has already begun by outlining a 5-year budget trajectory that will guide the future planning & budgeting efforts.

The largest part of our funding is planned to staff literacy leaders & early childhood educators. KtO dollars will help to offset the district’s budget for next year, since two new literacy leader positions were already planned for next year. These positions are not positions that have been funded in recent years due to declining funding, but the district sees them as necessary to support student literacy achievement. As stated in our pre-application, our administration is spread very thin over 225 square miles. Our assistant superintendent is responsible for the district’s K-12 curriculum, instruction & technology implementation across all content areas. This is in addition to coordinating assessments, analyzing data, providing professional development (PD), writing grants, participating in early learning and transitional partnership meetings & more. Our two elementary/middle level principals are spread across four buildings; one principal is responsible for 428 students across K-8 & two buildings separated by 8 miles, the other is responsible for 696 students across a K-5 and two buildings separated by 9 miles. We have hard-working leaders in our district who are dedicated to leading, learning & improving, but their responsibilities are all content areas, large numbers of students & multiple buildings. District leadership recognizes the need to provide additional support & has every intention of building in funds to ensure the continuation of funding for staff.

Our commitment to literacy is evident through the high priority we have placed on literacy PD over the past 2½ years. We have a literacy committee & prioritized funding to ensure future sustainability with our programs.

We fall short in our ability to monitor implementation. We are unable to have the on-going meetings & conversations necessary to provide the professional learning support necessary. We are unable to provide the K-12 implementation necessary to facilitate instructional growth. KtO dollars will help support the district’s continuation of these efforts, but they will not replace our original plans for high-quality professional development.

We are seeking additional funding through early childhood grants that will be available to help support our efforts in early childhood.

In summary, what is perfect about KtO funding from a MW perspective is timing. Our district has been moving towards & focusing on major literacy initiatives since the 09-10 school year. KtO funds will help to support the continuation of our efforts & move us forward at a much greater pace than originally anticipated. Our district is committed to a literacy focus & we will work to sustain programming throughout future years through careful budgeting and prioritizing.

*(2992 characters)*